

Menu Planning for Shorter or Longer Weeks in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns for grades K-12 are based on a five-day week. When a school week **regularly** operates on a shorter or longer cycle, menu planners must increase or decrease the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each day that deviates from the standard five-day week. For the vegetables component, adjustments are made only to the “additional vegetables” category. Due to the smaller size of the weekly vegetable subgroup requirements, the 20 percent adjustment is not practical for the five vegetable subgroups.

The daily requirements and dietary specifications are unaffected by a longer or shorter week. Since the dietary specifications are daily averages, either fewer or more days are averaged together to meet the specified targets for calories, saturated fat and sodium. The dietary specifications are the USDA’s nutrition standards for NSLP and SBP meals. The dietary specifications include weekly calorie ranges and limits for saturated fat and sodium. They also require that Nutrition Facts labels and manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving for all food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals. For more information, visit the “[Dietary Specifications \(Nutrition Standards for School Meals\)](#)” section of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Schools with **occasional** decreases in the school week due to holidays, snow days or other reasons are not required to adjust the weekly requirements. However, menus must be consistent with the intent of the meal patterns. For example, menu planners must ensure that they do not consistently fail to offer certain vegetable subgroups.

The charts in this document summarize these requirements. All amounts are rounded to the nearest ½ ounce equivalent (oz eq) and ¼ cup.

Note: Meal patterns for a four-day week, five-day week, and seven-day week are available on the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

This guidance applies only to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for preschoolers (ages 1-4) do not have weekly requirements. For guidance on the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

Menu Planning for Shorter or Longer Weeks in the NSLP and SBP

Weekly Requirements at Lunch

Components	Three-day school week for lunch		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	1½	1½	3
Vegetables (cups)	2¼	2¼	3
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	½	½	1
Beans/peas (legumes)	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	¼	¼	½
Additional vegetables to reach total	0	0	0
Grains (oz eq)	5-5½	5-6	6-7
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	5-6	5½-6	6-7
Fluid milk (cups)	3	3	3

Components	Four-day school week for lunch		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	2	2	4
Vegetables (cups)	3	3	4
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans/peas (legumes)	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	¼	¼	½
Grains (oz eq)	6½-7	6½-8	8-9½
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	6½-8	7-8	8-9½
Fluid milk (cups)	4	4	4

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Components	Six-day school week for lunch		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3	3	6
Vegetables (cups)	4½	4½	6
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans/peas (legumes)	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	1¾	1¾	2½
Grains (oz eq)	9½-11	9½-12	12-14½
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	9½-12	11-12	12-14½
Fluid milk (cups)	6	6	6

Components	Seven-day school week for lunch		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3½	3½	7
Vegetables (cups)	5¼	5¼	7
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans/peas (legumes)	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	2½	2½	3½
Grains (oz eq)	11-12½	11-14	14-17
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	11-14	12½-14	14-17
Fluid milk (cups)	7	7	7

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Weekly Requirements at Breakfast

The weekly amounts for the fruits component were effective July 1, 2014, when the “juice/fruit/vegetable” component became the fruits component, and the daily portion size for fruit increased from ½ cup to 1 cup.

Components	Three-day school week for breakfast		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3	3	3
Grains (oz eq)	4-6	5-6	5½-6
Fluid milk (cups)	3	3	3

Components	Four-day school week for breakfast		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	4	4	4
Grains (oz eq)	5½-8	6½-8	7-8
Fluid milk (cups)	4	4	4

Components	Six-day school week for breakfast		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	6	6	6
Grains (oz eq)	8½-12	9½-12	11-12
Fluid milk (cups)	6	6	6

Components	Seven-day school week for breakfast		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	7	7	7
Grains (oz eq)	10-14	11-14	12½-14
Fluid milk (cups)	7	7	7

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Resources

Fruits Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Fruits>

Grains Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Grains>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#MMA>

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Milk>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Resources for the School Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Meal_Pattern/Resources_School_Meal_Patterns_grades_K-12.pdf

School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Nutrition-Programs>

USDA Memo SP 38-2019: Meal Requirements under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-final-rule-nutrition-standards-national-school-lunch-and-school-breakfast-programs>

Vegetables Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Vegetables>

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For more information, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#), and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/Weekly_Adjustments_NSLP_SBP.pdf.

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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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